

Implex-13

REMARKS

1. Claims 1-34 were pending. Of these claims 1, 15, 16, 21-23, and 25-34 stand rejected, claims 17 and 24 stand objected to and claims 2-14 and 18-20 stand withdrawn from consideration on the merits.

2. This communication cancels claims 2-14 and 18-20.

3. Claims 1, 15, 16, 23, 25 and 29 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,722,977 to Wilhelmy.

This rejection is respectfully traversed as Wilhelmy clearly fails to expressly or inherently described all the features of the claimed invention. Specifically, Wilhelmy does not expressly or inherently describe a "tapered body section formed by: an end wall; a first pair of opposing wall portions converging toward the end wall; and a second pair of opposing wall portions converging toward the end wall," as claimed. In contrast, FIGS. 11 and 12 of Wilhelmy clearly show a spacer having only one pair of opposing wall portions 19' and 21' which converge toward end wall 22.

Although the Examiner insists that column 5, lines 44-67 describe "top and bottom surfaces 19, 21, and 19' and 21' converging toward the end wall," this is not what Wilhelmy describes. Wilhelmy describes:

As shown, the tapered wedge member 17...is formed with parallel top and bottom surface portions 19 and 21, respectively, and top and bottom surface portions 19' and 21' converging anteriorly toward and intercepted by end surface 22...

Implex-13

Since Wilhelmy describes that the top and bottom surfaces portions 19 and 21 are parallel to one another, surfaces 19 and 21 can not be converging toward the end surface 22, as the Examiner erroneously contends. Only the top and bottom surface portions 19' and 20' converge toward the end surface 22, as is clearly described and shown in Wilhelmy. Accordingly, Wilhelmy does not anticipate the claims.

In view of the foregoing, withdrawal of the 35 USC 102(b) rejection using Wilhelmy is respectfully requested.

4. Claims 21, 22, and 26-34 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wilhelmy in view of U.S. Patent 6,648,895 to Burkus *et al.* (Burkus).

As discussed above, Wilhelmy fails to expressly or inherently describe a "tapered body section formed by: an end wall; a first pair of opposing wall portions converging toward the end wall; and a second pair of opposing wall portions converging toward the end wall," as claimed. Burkus fails to cure the deficiencies of Wilhelmy, as Burkus does not describe, teach or suggest the first and second pair of opposing end wall portions converging toward the end.

In view of the foregoing, withdrawal of the 35 USC 103(a) rejection using Wilhelmy in view of Burkus is respectfully requested.

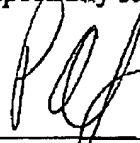
5. It is noted that claims 17 and 24 contain allowable subject matter.

6. Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested as it is believed that all outstanding issues have been addressed herein and, further, that claims 1, 15-17, and 21-

Impler-13
34 are in condition for allowance, early notification of which is earnestly solicited. Should there be any questions or matters whose resolution may be advanced by a telephone call, the examiner is cordially invited to contact applicants' undersigned attorney at his number listed below.

7. No fee is believed to be required for this communication. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge payment of any additional filing fees required under 37 CFR 1.16 and any patent application processing fees under 37 CFR 1.17, which are associated with this communication, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-2061.

Respectfully submitted,



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